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Jacksonville District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS RELEASES WATER FROM LAKE OKEECHOBEE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District announced today that they will begin an 11-day low-level release of water from Lake Okeechobee to both the Caloosahatchee River and the St. Lucie Canal on September 4, 2008. The release will reduce the amount of rise on the lake from rainfall left by Tropical Storm Fay and following rain events.

A pulse release to both estuaries will begin at 7 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4. For the next 11 days, the goal is to achieve a daily average flow of up to 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) to the Caloosahatchee and 1,800 cfs to the St. Lucie Estuary. The target flows to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuary will be measured at the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam and St. Lucie Lock and Dam.

This is the first release from Lake Okeechobee to the estuaries since April 2006. Regional drought conditions in South Florida had caused Lake Okeechobee to experience lower than normal water levels for an extended period of time.

On May 1, 2008, the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (2008 LORS) was approved and implemented. However, due to continued low lake water levels, the 2008 LORS had not been used for lake operations until this release.

Tropical Storm Fay struck the state of Florida in recent weeks and brought significant precipitation to the Lake Okeechobee and Kissimmee River Basins. As a result, Lake Okeechobee's water level rose approximately three feet. Today, the lake stage is 14.68 feet NGVD (National Geodetic Vertical Datum,



which equates to about sea level) and continues to slowly rise. Local basin runoff downstream of Lake Okeechobee is still flowing at W.P. Franklin (approximately 5,000 cfs) and St. Lucie (approximately 1,100 cfs). The lake is within the targeted levels of 2008 LORS, which is 12.5 to 15.5 feet NGVD.

The 11-day pulse releases are designed to mimic nature and provide discharges from the lake to the estuaries similar to what might be seen during a typical rainfall event beginning with low levels of runoff, then peaking and falling off to no runoff. Releases will be made via the St. Lucie Canal to the east and the Caloosahatchee River to the west. The goal is to strike a balance between the health of the lake's littoral zone and the health of the estuaries.

For further information, please call the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District Corporate Communication Office at 904-232-2236 or 904-614-4976.

Water level data and flows for Lake Okeechobee and the Central and Southern Florida Project can be found on the Jacksonville District web site at: <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/reports/r-oke.html>